



Sierran

To Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

Are We Winning on Clean Energy?

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Everything Old is New Again?

By Colleen Kiernan

On August 22, Chapter leaders and I came together to celebrate an important milestone. I have now been Director for five years and am the longest serving Georgia Chapter Director. In this last 2015 issue of the Georgia Sierran, I want to take a few column inches to take stock of where we've come and where we are going.

When I pulled up to the Chapter Conservation Retreat on my first day as Director, we had a Beyond Coal Organizer working on Cobb EMC reform that would eventually lead to the dismantling of Power4Georgians, the cancelling of the proposed Ben Hill coal plant and putting Plant Washington on life support. We had a RAIL Committee working on the Clayton nonbinding referendum and our Wildlands Committee was working to protect freshwater turtles.

Our Outings program struggled for several years but is now growing again as we train more leaders and offer more. We led 66 outings in 2014 and are on track to offer 132 this year, reaching over 800 participants. Our Energy Committee is now so big and effective, we have subcommittee breakouts at our meetings so that we can continue working on the multiple subissues that we need to get to 100% clean energy by 2030.



Colleen Kiernan, Chapter Director

Our Wildlands Committee is also rocking, collecting over 600 signatures at over 30 events to ask the U.S. Forest Service to protect Cooper Creek. Our RAIL Committee is promoting a

statewide rail vision, keeping tabs on the conversation about expanding transit in Gwinnett County, and working to secure the rail component of the Clayton MARTA expansion.

It's our job to be the most effective grassroots environmental group in the state, and as a member, you are already helping. We need your input right now in selecting the leadership that will continue to guide our growth and increased effectiveness, so please read the candidate statements and vote in our Chapter Executive Committee election as well as a Group Election (if applicable). We must continue to strengthen our organization as well as build the movement big enough to win on the most pressing issue of our time: climate change. We hope to see and hear from you as we continue on our mission to explore, enjoy and protect our planet. 🌱

About Georgia Sierran

Articles: Send materials to: gasierran@gmail.com. Maximum word length: 750 words with one photo. Please include high-resolution digital photos (200 dpi) with your story.

Moving? Send address changes to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968. Send changes by email: address.changes@sierraclub.org

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ON THE COVER



On August 5, over 100 activists from the Georgia Sierra Club and groups such as Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and Environment Georgia came together to show strong grassroots support for the Clean Power Plan. Photo by Erik Voss.



Due to an editing oversight, we omitted the description for our cover image in the June/July/August issue. The photo depicts a June 24 interfaith rally at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Decatur, to support care for the environment endorsed by Pope Francis. Photo courtesy St. Timothy's Church.

Sierrans Help Propel Bennett to Victory in HD80

By Yeou-Rong Jih

On a sweltering August afternoon two days before a hotly contested special runoff election for Georgia House District 80, Taylor Bennett stood in Blackburn Park and spoke passionately about the importance of state investment in clean and renewable energy sources, preserving and creating green spaces in metro areas, and improving and expanding transit options across the city. His audience was 17 Georgia Sierra Club volunteers who had assembled for a get-out-the-vote canvassing effort for Bennett. The diverse group included Colleen Kiernan, Chapter Director; Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, Director of the Office of Sustainability for Atlanta; Executive Committee political representatives; Wildlands and Wildlife Committee members; Smart Energy Committee volunteers; and youth organizers.

Energized by Bennett's speech, volunteers knocked on over 800 doors that afternoon. In spite of challenges including closed doors, blazing heat and overly enthusiastic terrier guard dogs, volunteers said they enjoyed engaging voters. Wildlands and Wildlife Committee Coordinator Joshua Hanthorn shared this anecdote afterwards through social media: "I canvassed this past Sunday and it was a great experience. Some of the doors I went to had already made up their minds, but at my last door the man wasn't familiar with the candidates and wasn't going to vote. After a short friendly discussion, he was convinced Bennett was the right person for the job. He asked where the polls were, and told me he will be voting for Bennett."

Other volunteers spoke of how empowering it felt to help get out the vote. "There were some people who didn't even realize a special runoff election was happening or didn't think they were living in the right area to be eligible to vote. It was great to be able to let people know they had a chance to make a difference in their district," said Beyond Coal Organizer Ian Karra.

On the evening of August 11, Taylor Bennett and the canvassers' campaign efforts paid off. Nearly 5,000 people in District 80 (which encompasses parts of Dunwoody, Brookhaven and Sandy Springs) turned out to vote in the special runoff. Bennett captured 54% of the overall vote and won decisively by 451 votes. After learning about the win, canvassing volunteers were elated and felt that their efforts made a difference.

After the election, Bennett stated, "I couldn't be more appreciative of the Sierra volunteers who came out to canvass with us during the campaign. They brought tremendous amounts of passion, professionalism and enthusiasm to our get-out-the-vote effort and really helped us to spread our message of open,



L-R: Jeff Schoenberg, Taylor Bennett, Colleen Kiernan, Yeou-Rong Jih and Sam Collier celebrate their victory. Photo by Erik Voss.

accountable and transparent representation for our district. I look forward to continuing to work with the Sierra Club to address and protect environmental concerns as our state and communities continue to grow."

The Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club only responsibly and strategically endorses candidates in political races. The Chapter is nonpartisan and primarily focuses on candidates' stances on environmental issues when considering an endorsement. This election was critical because supporting Bennett could significantly further Georgia Sierra Club's main objectives, which include promoting renewable energy, expanding transit and protecting green space. Bennett, a labor attorney and former Georgia Tech quarterback, supports Georgia's growing solar and green building industries. He recognizes the importance of MARTA to bringing business to his district and is therefore determined to improve transit across the state. Bennett is also committed to growing green space within his district. Furthermore, he supports regulations that ensure businesses and industries respect and protect the environment, will support efforts to protect coastal Georgia marshes and wetlands, and will work to enforce responsible woodland logging throughout the state. Leading into the 2016 elections, the Sierra Club will be on the lookout for environmentally conscientious candidates like Taylor Bennett, because the environmental community needs more strong and committed allies at the Georgia Capitol. 🌲

Are We Winning on Energy in Georgia?

By Ian Karra and Colleen Kiernan

Over the last five years, grassroots efforts from the Beyond Coal campaign, intervention by the Chapter and its strategic partners, and leadership from the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) have transformed the state's energy landscape. Once mostly reliant on coal, Georgia is now the fastest growing solar market in the nation and the #1 state for new clean energy jobs.

Every three years, the PSC works with Georgia Power to update their long range plan, known as the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), to meet Georgia's electricity needs. The next round of that begins in January. As we think about the decisions that will be made as part of this process, we assess where we've been, where we are and how to bring about Sierra Club's vision for our electricity future: one that is fossil fuel free by 2030.

Where We Were: Georgia Power Said Solar Won't Work

"I'm bullish on solar," Southern Company (Georgia Power's parent company) CEO Tom Fanning has said to Sierra Club volunteers and staff for years, a surprising statement given that other representatives of the company as recently as 2009 were still making presentations saying solar wouldn't work in Georgia. Starting in the 2010 IRP, the PSC (along with solar supporters) began pushing Georgia Power to incorporate solar into the mix, starting with 50 megawatts (MW), followed by a new program approved in 2012 for 225 MW, with an encore in 2013 of 525 MW. Add 90 MW more for military bases and Georgia will have over 1,000 megawatts online by the end of next year.

On July 1, the day that the Solar Power Free-Market Financing Act of 2015 went into effect, Georgia Power launched its new solar "program," which isn't a program so much as a referral system. You can fill out a form to talk to one of their solar experts, they will refer you to an installer, and, if you need financing, they will refer you to a lender.

As for wind, Fanning has not been a supporter. He claims it's too risky to get it here. But wind is cheap. And as the technology develops and hub heights are taller, we do have wind potential in Georgia and all over the Southeast. Georgia Power did purchase 250 MW in 2013 from a project in Oklahoma. Companies like Clean Line are working on building high voltage transmission from the Midwest to the Southeast that would minimize the risk of congestion. As part of the approval of the Oklahoma deal, the PSC ordered Georgia Power to do a study to see if other good deals were out there. The answer was a resounding "yes." Wind developers responded with over 5,600 MW to a "request for information" and prices ranged from \$15.77/megawatt hour (Mwh) to \$86/Mwh (current avoided cost is most likely in the high \$30s to low \$40s). So why did



Georgia Power vehemently fight moving forward with a more formal "request for proposals?" Because wind - even though it is cheaper, cleaner, safer and more reliable (because it does not depend on water for cooling) - is not part of its plan.

Where We Are: Consolidation of Power with SoCo and AGL Merger

Georgia is a success story when it comes to market forces driving clean energy development. Just ask your Public Service Commissioner or Southern's Fanning. They'll tell you "no one is doing more" to bring consumers cheap, clean renewable energy.

However, although Southern continues to move forward on renewables (Southern Power, a subsidiary of Southern Company, just acquired 500 MW of solar projects in California), if you look where the big money is, you see where its priorities really are. Unfortunately, the next priority investment is \$8 billion to acquire a natural gas pipeline company, Atlanta-based AGL Resources, one of the largest natural gas distributors in the nation with major pipeline infrastructure throughout the southeastern United States. Southern's strategy here: one baby step forward on clean energy, two giant steps back on natural gas.

While the release of the Clean Power Plan this summer highlighted the importance of decarbonizing our energy systems, Southern is demonstrating its inability to adapt into a 21st century utility, instead betting on last century technology and disregarding climate risk, sensitivity of water resources, and fuel price volatility.

Proponents of the merger, including all five Public Service Commissioners and Governor Nathan Deal, say the union will provide better customer service and a more robust energy infrastructure. PSC Chairman Chuck Eaton lauded the move, saying the Clean Power Plan has made natural gas an even more important resource. True, considering large coal plants like

Plant McDonough-Atkinson and Plant Yates have switched over to burning natural gas in recent years. Unfortunately, it is a dangerous strategy to use gas as a cure-all to our coal dependence, especially with renewables at historically low prices. When it comes to our fossil fuel addiction, natural gas should be treated as a nicotine patch, not an excuse to switch from Marlboros to Marlboro Lights.

Southern Company is making one big bet on carbon-free electricity generation in Georgia. Unfortunately, it is the most expensive, complicated and risky way to generate electricity: nuclear power. The expansion of Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 near Augusta is expected to cost Georgia Power around \$8 billion, but has suffered \$800 million in cost overruns and 18 months of construction delays. Ratepayers are currently paying for the project every month on their bills, although the first new unit will not come online until 2019. When it does, it will guzzle millions of gallons of water from the Savannah River daily. Though Southern Company hails Vogtle as a highlight of the “nuclear Renaissance,” the project has come to symbolize uneconomical and irresponsible energy planning.

The Clean Power Plan is an unprecedented opportunity to unleash Georgia’s clean energy potential. But while wind, water and sun could power Georgia homes and businesses, lower bills and create jobs, Southern chooses to pursue strategies that benefit shareholders at the expense of ratepayers. Major investment in renewables could benefit both, but Southern has different plans in store. So far in 2015, after a tepid attempt at rooftop solar and a missed opportunity to procure additional wind power, Southern’s “no one is doing more” attitude has seemingly become “that’s probably enough.”

How Sierra Club Will Make ‘Em Turn, Not Burn

So how are we in Georgia going to meet Sierra Club’s ambitious goal of a fossil-fuel-free grid by 2030? We are going to refocus our efforts on market-driven solutions: energy efficiency and solar, wind and geothermal power. These types of power are cleaner, safer, more reliable and cheaper than coal, natural gas and nuclear. Real conservatives and progressives support them. And the policy framework already exists: the Public Service Commission is required to pick the lowest cost option.

As our friend, Dennis Creech, co-founder of Southface likes to say, the cheapest kilowatt-hour (kWh) is the one that is never produced. Consumers pay bills, not rates. So who cares if

our rates are lower than somewhere else if our bills are higher? According to personal finance resource website Wallethub.com, Georgians’ electricity bills average \$145/month, ranking us the sixth most expensive state in the country. Our “low” rates are deceptive. If you are a Georgia Power customer and you add the Environmental Compliance Cost and the Nuclear Construction Cost lines into your bill and divide by kWhs used, you will find your rates are effectively \$.145/kWh, far higher than the \$.10 that the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports, putting us in the same range as New Jersey and Vermont, and higher than California!

So when we put forward our clean energy vision of energy efficiency, wind and solar, we inevitably hit the question: what about baseload?

The argument goes that we will always need (at least nuclear power!) plants that run all the time because the sun doesn’t always shine and the wind doesn’t always blow. There are appliances like refrigerators that need a steady stream of electricity at every moment. And we are used to being able to turn on the lights and charge our devices whenever we need to.

There is no doubt that we need a succinct, easy to understand answer to this question, but the long version is this: Big, centralized power plants are analogous to the mainframe computers and landlines of the 1970s and 1980s. Today we hold computers in our hands or pockets and we use satellites to convey voice and data. Electricity production and consumption will become much more dynamic as more and more homeowners install solar on

their roofs, Tesla battery packs in their garages, and upgrade their homes with technology that allows them to lower and much more carefully control their demand.

The most important change to facilitate this shift is in how electricity rates are made. Georgia Power currently offers a “Nights & Weekends” program in which they charge \$.05/kWh except for the hours where there is the most demand; from 2-7 p.m. June to September, they charge \$.20/kWh. This is a good start, but we will need an even broader demand-flexible rate system that will help consumers lower and manage their electricity bills. Rather than punitively charge those with rooftop solar for the privilege of connecting to the grid, consumers should pay for the grid proportional to how much and what time they use it.

Rate making happens in a proceeding just after the Integrated Resource Plan is wrapped up, known as the “Rate Case,” which will be filed in August and decided next December. Stay tuned! ♣

Georgia Public Service Commissioners in Their Own Words

“I know the sun will come up and it’s free. It’s not owned by Georgia Power, it’s not owned by Bubba McDonald, it’s not owned by the Public Service Commission. It’s free. And to deprive people of the opportunity to take advantage of technology, to me, is wrong.”

Commissioner Bubba McDonald on “Why Solar”

“We don’t risk construction overruns or weather-related issues because our contract is for firm energy regardless of whether the wind is blowing or not... it is a good start and creates savings for our ratepayers.”

Commissioner Tim Echols on the Blue Canyon Wind Deal

Sierra Works to Save North Georgia Forests

**By William Tomlin,
Wildlands Committee Chair**

The Wildlands and Wildlife Committee continues its work to save your National Forests. The committee is working to build awareness of a Forest Service proposal that would devastate over 3,500 acres of pristine forest in and around the Cooper Creek Watershed in Union County and is launching a campaign to tell the Forest Service to save Cooper Creek.

The Forest Service's proposal would bring commercial logging, thinning, burning and the application of dangerous chemical herbicides to the steep slopes and old-growth forests of the Cooper Creek, Coosa Creek and Youngcane Creek Watersheds, threatening these streams with increased runoff and a significantly altered ecosystem. The Wildlands and Wildlife Committee has been tabling at festivals, farmers markets and other venues around metro Atlanta and northeast Georgia throughout the summer, raising awareness about this destructive proposal and collecting signatures to tell the Forest Service that they can do better.

The committee expects to see a revised proposal this fall when the Forest Service is scheduled to release a draft Environmental Assessment for the project. Forest Service employees have said the revision will include fewer acres to be cut, but such statements are cold comfort when many of the treatments laid out in the original proposal are designated as inappropriate by the Forest Service's own management plan for the Chattahoochee National Forest. Unless the revision shows vast improvements, the committee will continue its work to tell the



Saving old-growth forests in the Cooper Creek Watershed remains a top priority for the Chapter's Wildlands & Wildlife campaign

Forest Service that the forest belongs to all of us and we don't want to see it clear cut.

Public pressure works. In June, the Forest Service released a final Environmental Assessment for its project in the Upper Warwoman Watershed in which it scaled back proposed cutting and dropped plans to build an unnecessary road, citing public pressure. The committee sent the Forest Service a number of comments from Sierra Club members earlier this year urging these changes, and the Forest Service listened. The Cooper

Creek Project is larger, and we'll need more help to stop it. Visit the Georgia Chapter website to learn more and to find how you can get involved.

The Wildlands and Wildlife Committee has worked in other venues to protect Georgia's natural treasures. In June, the committee presented oral and written comments to Environmental Protection Division Watershed Protection Branch Chief Jac Capp urging him to maintain the current 750 cubic feet per second minimum flow requirement on the Chattahoochee River at Peachtree Creek, noting the importance of adequate streamflow in protecting environmental and human health and maintaining recreation. The committee also submitted written comments, in conjunction with attorneys at GreenLaw, on the revised draft of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) thanking the Department of Natural Resources for acknowledging the threat climate change poses to wildlife while urging the agency to do more to build resilient, adaptable habitats to better protect Georgia's wildlife from the realities of climate change. 🌲



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will. There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

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Gift Planning Program

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San Francisco, CA 94105

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Despite Mixed 2015, RAIL Campaign Optimistic

By David Emory

The Georgia Chapter's RAIL (Regional Action to Improve Livability) campaign, which advocates green transportation options and sustainable community development, had another busy year in 2015. While the results weren't always what we had hoped for, this remains a time of great potential for transit in Georgia, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead.

To be fair, 2014 was a tough act for transit supporters to follow. Last November saw one of our most exciting victories in recent memory: the overwhelming approval of MARTA's expansion into Clayton County, the first jurisdictional expansion of MARTA since the 1970s, and the largest infusion of new dedicated transit funding in Georgia (roughly \$50 million annually) in decades. Late 2014 also brought the opening of the initial segment of Atlanta's new streetcar system, the region's first rail transit expansion since 2000.

Heading into 2015, our first big test was the legislative session, where legislators were determined to take action on statewide transportation funding. The final product of that effort, House Bill (HB) 170, was largely a disappointment. While the bill includes some concessions for transit - namely, the long-sought elimination of the "50/50 handcuffs" restricting how MARTA can spend its own revenue - its centerpiece is a major hike to the state gas tax, a funding stream currently restricted to spending on roads and bridges. The passage of HB 170 reinforces the need to open Georgia's gas tax to all travel modes - a heavy lift politically, but an essential goal if Georgia intends to compete with states that are embracing sustainable transportation options.

While the legislature continues to disappoint on transit, developments at the local level are much more encouraging. MARTA shows continued progress



Members of the Friends of Clayton Transit coalition at the inaugural Clayton County MARTA bus trip in March

under General Manager Keith Parker; 2015 saw ridership gains, a budget surplus, and a concerted effort to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) around rail stations. The initial roll-out of bus service in Clayton County has been well received, and MARTA is pressing ahead with engineering studies for the region's first commuter rail line. The rail component fits into a larger statewide conversation about train service to Macon, Columbus and beyond - a conversation the RAIL campaign is excited to help advance.

Looking ahead, 2016 promises to be another busy year. With Clayton leading the way on transit expansion, Atlanta's northern suburbs are realizing they can't afford to sit still on the issue. Cobb County is actively exploring concepts for bus rapid transit service on Cobb Parkway, while Gwinnett County has kicked off a "Great Exchange" about transportation - with transit expansion emerging as a central theme. Both Cobb and Gwinnett have the option to join MARTA without any legislative action, and momentum is building in Gwinnett in particular.

With plenty of opportunity on the horizon, now is a great time to become involved with the Chapter's work on sustainable transportation and development. The RAIL Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month; see <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/rail> for details. ♣

Elba Island LNG Expansion Impacts: Bigger than Ever

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter's Coastal Group will hold an informational meeting on the imminent expansion and reauthorization of Elba Island from a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility to a natural gas liquefaction facility capable of exporting 4 million tons of LNG per year. The meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on October 15 at the First Presbyterian Church, 520 Washington Ave., Savannah, Georgia.

The construction and operation impacts include:

- Over 700 percent increase in the facility's carbon and greenhouse gas emissions
- Continued operation of three deteriorating storage tanks built in the 1970s
- Increased traffic (over 10,000 heavy trucks per month in first year of construction, emitting 30,000 tons of greenhouse gases)
- Increases to the electrical grid, including a new President Street substation and electrical lines (more than tripling capacity)
- Over 200 trucks per month delivering gasoline and refrigerants required for ongoing liquefaction process
- New roads, wetland impacts and 11 new buildings, including a hazardous material storage building

If approved, this massive export facility will have significant impacts on Savannah's air quality, safety, traffic and quality of life. LNG exports will raise domestic gas prices and depress wages due to an increase in fuel costs. For this reason, U.S. manufacturers are anti-LNG-export.

The public is invited to attend and ask questions following a brief presentation.

For additional information, contact Karen Grainey at 912-596-2052 or karengrainey@bellsouth.net.

On the Long March: Sierra Club Supports America's Journey for Justice

By Yeou-Rong Jih

On August 7, approximately 120 miles into a grueling 860-mile march, members of the NAACP were greeted by the smiling faces of the LaGrange Group as they crossed over the Alabama-Georgia state line. LaGrange members Eric Simpson and Ellen Parkhurst traded handshakes and greetings with NAACP Southeastern Regional Director Kevin Myles before joining other members of the marching line on their way through Georgia.

This was the start of the NAACP's two-week 204-mile trek through Georgia, as a part of their America's Journey for Justice march from Selma, Alabama to Washington, D.C. Throughout the summer, Journey for Justice activists mobilized to demand greater economic, social and environmental justice across America. The Sierra Club is a proud supporter of the NAACP's Justice Summer and Aaron Mair, President of the Sierra Club Board of Directors, joined the march at its kickoff in Selma. Blogging on the Journey for Justice, Mair stated:



Savannah River Group's Greg Sutherland with NAACP President and CEO Cornell Brooks marching the last leg through Georgia

"The Sierra Club is proud to march with the NAACP this summer to call for justice and action to protect and expand access to the ballot box, to quality education, to good-paying jobs, and for a fair and equitable society for everyone.

"Everyone deserves the right to clean air, clean water, and protection from the effects of climate disruption. But the same communities facing the worst environmental injustices are the ones facing voter suppression and racial discrimination.

"When our voices are silenced by attacks on the ballot box, our criminal justice system is stacked against individuals, and our access to sustainable jobs with living wages and equitable public education is limited, our democracy suffers, and so does our ability to tackle a climate crisis that is bigger than us all. [...]"

"Under the banner 'our lives, our votes, our jobs, and our schools matter' America's Journey for Justice will demand our country adopt a policy agenda that protects the lives of Americans, reverses climate disruption, promotes clean energy jobs and living wages, and offers uncorrupted and unfettered access to the ballot box and equitable public education."

A week after LaGrange members greeted the Journey for Justice at the state line, Georgia Chapter Director Colleen Kiernan joined the march for 20 miles from Lilburn to Auburn. Capping a long day of marching, she attended the Journey for Justice Mass Meeting at the King Center in Atlanta and was joined by staff members Brionté McCorkle, Ian Karra and Yeou-Rong Jih, as well as Georgia ExCom Chair Dave Emory and



The Georgia Sierra Club contingent at the King Center following the Journey for Justice Mass Meeting

Centennial Group volunteers. The Sierra Club contingent engaged with Journey for Justice marchers and NAACP leaders as they spoke on the importance of equal voting rights, education reform, clean water and clean air for all. After the meeting, the group headed to an old Sierra Club & Beer haunt, the Edgewood Speakeasy, to discuss Sierra Club's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives and how to incorporate DEI goals into the Georgia Chapter's issue campaigns and membership.

One week later, Savannah River Group (SRG) members, including Group Co-Chair Sam Booher, attended Journey for Justice teach-ins on education reform and voting rights as the march passed through Augusta. Furthermore, SRG's Greg Sutherland marched five miles on the last leg of the Journey for Justice in Georgia alongside NAACP President Cornell Brooks. The Georgia Sierra Club wished the Journey for Justice well as they continued their slow and steady march towards Washington, D.C. 🌲

Read Aaron Mair's full blog post on the Journey for Justice:
www.sierraclub.org/change/2015/08/50-years-later-we-must-restorethevra

Read Colleen Kiernan's op-ed in The Atlanta Journal Constitution:
www.myajc.com/news/news/opinion/voting-rights-vital-to-environment/nnMr4

Outdoor Afro and Georgia Sierra Connect at Sweetwater Creek Park



By Brionté McCorkle

The Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club joined with Outdoor Afro Atlanta during July for a “Healing Hike” at Sweetwater Creek State Park in Lithia Springs, Georgia. Although it was humid and at times a bit strenuous, the afternoon was rejuvenating, refreshing and exactly what Sierrans and Outdoor Afros needed to reconnect with nature and connect with each other. Over 20 people came out to enjoy the creek as it rushed by the trail, check out the five-story ruins of the Civil War-era New Manchester textile mill, and enjoy the shade provided by the trees overhead.

In response to numerous studies claiming that people of color do not get outdoors, groups like Outdoor Afro have been created to dismantle that paradigm. They have formed a community dedicated to reconnecting African-Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities such as camping, hiking, biking, birding, fishing, gardening, skiing and more. Even more inspiring is that they are igniting a renewed interest in the conservation movement as new groups of people are being exposed to these beautiful natural areas, learning about how they are being threatened, and asking how they can help protect them.

The Sierra Club has been developing relationships with a diverse group of organizations dedicated to getting more people outdoors, including Outdoor Afro, Girl-Trek, NOLS, and Latino Outdoors. We firmly believe these partnerships will help us develop a sustainable base of support for all of our Sierra Club Outdoors programming as well as our local conservation work. By diversifying who we connect with on the trail, we can broaden who we connect with on our conservation issues.

To learn more about Outdoor Afro, visit <http://www.outdoorafro.com/>

Activist Training Inspires Leaders

Experienced and new Chapter and committee leaders met for a spirited Activist Training session on July 14 in Decatur. Led by staff members Ian Karra and Brionté McCorkle, participants shared and practiced some of the techniques and strategies that have been used successfully in previous winning campaigns. Sam Collier’s engaging recap of our successful fight to save the Okefenokee from strip mining was a perfect addition to the agenda. Please consider enrolling in the next Activist Training; see the Chapter website at georgia.sierraclub.org for updates.



“I work for a company that’s a large energy consumer. The Georgia Sierra Club activist training I attended can help me influence how and where the company purchases renewable energy for its large data center sites. I’m also an outings leader, and now I can better guide our attendees to our committees, events and activist opportunities in the Georgia chapter.”

Peter Johnson



“I am a professional teacher; a Centennial ExCom member and outings leader; an Adopt-A-Mile organizer; and a growing activist. I want to inspire other people in my community to get involved and help make a difference in protecting our environment. The chapter activist training in July inspired me with stories from other activists. I also learned some techniques I can use and share with others in my group.”

Angelica Netterville

Yeou-Rong Jih Joins Chapter Staff as Volunteer Coordinator

By Diane Shearer

Yeou-Rong Jih joined the staff of Georgia Sierra in mid-July as our Volunteer Coordinator. She is not a new face for many members in the metro area and Savannah. Two years ago she returned to Atlanta after studying in England, came to a Smart Energy Committee meeting and immediately began volunteering.

Former Beyond Coal Coordinator Seth Gunning said of Yeou, “She was always so enthusiastic and eager to do anything, whether it was finding a venue for an event, attending a meeting, or helping arrange transportation to bring Coastal members up for the climate change march and rally last summer.”

Not too many months after arriving in Atlanta, Yeou moved to Savannah where she quickly became involved with Coastal Sierra. Yeou says in retrospect she is glad she had experience with a group outside the metro area because there are many ongoing battles in the coastal region and she gained a better



Yeou-Rong Jih at the August 5 Clean Power Plan rally. Photo by Erik Voss.

view of the big picture and what it takes to get people involved in Sierra Club on both group and chapter levels.

Perhaps Yeou inherited some of her concern for the environment from her mother, who wrote a book on eco-familialism, but it was an activist friend in England who sparked her involvement with environmental problems. Then her volunteering in Atlanta and Savannah convinced her that environmental work was what she wanted to be doing at this point when all efforts to slow climate

change are so critical.

After graduating from high school Yeou attended Emory University and double-majored in Neuroscience/Behavioral Biology and Chinese. She went on to attend Oxford University, receiving an MSc in Research Psychology. Realizing the field was overcrowded, she decided not to pursue a Ph.D. and came back to the States. Yeou hopes her knowledge of psychology will help “build a creative, productive and energetic environment” in the Georgia Chapter. ♣

Neill Herring, Mark Woodall Named Environmental Heroes

Every environmental activist who has spent time at the Capitol knows Neill Herring and Mark Woodall are our heroes of the corridors, so it was heartening to see Greenlaw recognize them with the 2015 Environmental Heroes award, given to those who have done exceptional work in environmental protection. As Steve Caley, Senior Attorney at GreenLaw, put it, “Neill and Mark are the quintessential examples of heroes for the environment. They have tirelessly advocated to protect Georgia’s natural wonders for many decades. Even in the face of sometimes withering criticism, they have never wavered. We are proud to honor them for their truly heroic work.”



Neill has been working on environmental issues since the early 1970s when he opposed Georgia Power rate increases and Plant Vogtle. In 1980 he became a lobbyist, and by 1989 was working for Georgia Sierra. He helped found and remains active in the Georgia Water Coalition.

Mark became involved in environmental work when he helped defeat a waste facility in Taylor County in 1990. Neill assisted with the battle at the Capitol. Mark then became Legislative Chair of Sierra for most of the next 20 years, and he and Neill together have helped defeat many bad bills. Mark was also a founding board member of Flint Riverkeeper in 2008.

Current Flint Riverkeeper Gordon Rogers says simply, “I don’t know what I would have done without those guys. They have been mentors and confidants, and I would be nowhere nearly as knowledgeable of legislative process

continued on following page

Brionté McCorkle Welcomes Daughter Aminata

By Brionté McCorkle

On Saturday, August 29, I welcomed my baby girl, Aminata, into this world. While I was expecting, “life changing” was a phrase I constantly heard when informing friends and family that my little one was on her way. Indeed, from the moment I laid eyes on her, I was overwhelmed with natural feelings of love and had a sense that nothing would ever be the same. In these first few days, my mind has been in overdrive as I adjust to a new way of life. This new life not only involves different routines, but also has presented a fresh perspective on my commitment to the environment.

While pregnant, I spent much time wondering how to raise my child in accord with the environment. I explored alternative soaps, lotions and detergents. I read up on reusable diapers and asked everyone who might have tried unconventional, less wasteful methods to share with me their experiences. I rejected the thought of using artificial formulas and learned as much as I could about effective breastfeeding. I “greened” my household as much as possible, revived plants, and found new uses for old items



as I went through my nesting period. However, all of these changes—though helpful—were shallow. They were things that I always knew I would try as a mother, especially having been so deeply involved with the environmental movement for many years. Surprisingly, it was not until after Aminata arrived that I began to think more profoundly about how it affected my work as an environmental activist.

I have long thought about how climate change would affect my future

and the people I love. Disrupted food systems could lead to mass starvation; polluted air and water could lead to a plethora of health issues; rapid loss of biodiversity could lead to mass extinction of valuable species that we rely on to thrive and might carry the cures to long-fought diseases. This was not the future I wanted to live in nor raise children in. I have always understood that these issues would present themselves in my lifetime, and that we have the solutions available now to prevent the worst of them from manifesting. For example, we know that shifting to cleaner energy sources, investing in more efficient ways to move people and products, and protecting what is left of our natural areas can significantly curb pollution. Still, our leaders at every level of government have found minor, petty reasons not to act and continue to push off addressing the problem.

Now, with my baby in my arms, it is clearer than ever that the future is here now. It is not just about me anymore—in fact, it never has been. Seeing my daughter has reignited my fire, and I believe we must work to address climate change with an even greater sense of urgency. Due to years of inaction, natural disasters continue to grow more intense and occur more frequently, but what is inspiring is that each day people are innovating and demanding more sustainable solutions to our problems. My work as an organizer is to help pave the way for these solutions, and to secure incremental wins. These wins add up to even greater victories, the benefits of which may not fully be realized while I am here, but surely, my daughter will see.

For now, I will spend the next several weeks exploring motherhood and enjoying my beautiful baby girl. I will return just in time for the Chapter Retreat, where I will once again focus on protecting the environment with renewed vigor for all future generations.

Heroes, continued from previous page

without them.” He also noted that the work they do is often tedious and exhausting, and we are all served by their tenacity.

Colleen Kiernan, Georgia Sierra Chapter Director, noted, “I get to go to the meeting with all the state lobbyists from all over the country, and I can say that Georgia is lucky to have the best. Neill and Mark are the most quick-witted, the most strategic, and definitely the most quotable lobbyists of any other state lobbyists in the country.”



April Ingle, former Director of Georgia River Network, shared that sentiment, saying, “Environmental work beats up lots of people, but Neill and Mark are so dedicated. They read bills carefully, develop good relationships with both Capitol insiders and the media.”

And April summed up for all of us how much Neill and Mark mean to Sierra Club and everyone else they work with: “We all owe such a huge debt of gratitude to them for all they do and all the time they spend.”

Congratulations, Neill and Mark! 🌱

Membership

Be Green, Save Green – Become an E-Subscriber Today!



Did you know that the Georgia Chapter spends roughly 6 percent of its annual budget printing and mailing the Sierran? Looking for an easy way to help the Chapter – and the environment? Remember that at any time you may “opt out” of receiving the printed Sierran. Members who do so will continue to receive every issue in its entirety (in full, brilliant

color, no less) – only it will arrive in your inbox, not your mailbox.

If you prefer to continue receiving the printed newsletter, there is no need to do anything. But if you'd like to switch to the electronic edition please contact the Chapter office at **404-607-1262 x221** or **georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org**. Our budget – and our trees! – will thank you.

Note: in accordance with Chapter bylaws, all members will receive the annual election issue by mail.



Mark Your Calendar for the Chapter Holiday Party!

*This year's Chapter Holiday Party will be held **Thursday, December 10** at the Chapter office in Decatur. Details to follow!*

JOIN US FOR SIERRA CLUB & BEER



Join us on **Wednesday, November 18** for another evening of environmental trivia and socializing. Location and topic to be announced. Check the Chapter website for details.



Cut Clear Cutting

Americans deserve clean air and water, healthy forests and a sustainable economy. In California alone, over a million acres of forested land are scheduled for clear-cut type logging. Clearcutting and loss of natural forests is harming water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, recreation and tourism throughout the nation. Help the Sierra Club fight to replace clear cutting with sustainable logging.

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Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1250
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or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org

Savannah River Group

Since our group takes a small vacation after June, our last endeavor before the September meeting was our annual July picnic, well attended by happy (if not hot!) folks who enjoyed barbecue, swimming, kayaking and just relaxing at Mistletoe State Park.

We are still waiting to see what else may develop with Kinder Morgan's ill-advised attempts to run that pipeline along our Savannah River, but hopefully it will in the end not be approved. Cathy Black, our hard-working Outings Chair has some great hikes and camping weekends lined up for this fall. Check our website: <http://www.studio2g.com/srg/home.aspx>.

The September monthly meeting featured our annual Ice Cream Social and a program on kayaking. Several of our newer members wanted to acquire boating skills so they can help with our annual October Rivers Alive cleanup of the Augusta Canal.

Also, remember: **group and chapter elections are just around the corner! Please vote.**

- Judy Gordon



Chief Chef, Tony Hobbs: "Get 'em while they're hot!"

Greater Gwinnett Group

Schools are back in session and the traffic is worse. I do not know if it was the result of the new school year beginning or a wreck somewhere along my route home after work, but my commute this past week averaged anywhere from 50% to twice as long as it normally takes. There is nothing like sitting at a standstill on I-285 and I-85 to make one think there has to be a better way. And, there is. Our group's August meeting was about bringing public rail transportation to Gwinnett, facilitated by The Great Exchange.

What is The Great Exchange on Transportation?

The Great Exchange (#thegr8exchange) is a grassroots campaign in Gwinnett that is bringing people together to discuss one of the most pressing issues facing our community today: transportation. Many people have been talking about what Gwinnett needs to do in this regard. The week of Aug. 24, Gwinnett residents and workers had an opportunity to speak for themselves and to share their views on what the county needs and how methods of transportation can shape their future.

According to a Sept. 6 Atlanta Journal Constitution article, more than 4,000 people texted responses or completed an online survey during the week. Chuck Warbington, Executive Director of the Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District, said he was impressed with the responders' comments. People clearly wanted transportation options. Dominant suggestions besides cars were trains, buses, bikes, walking or some combination of methods. Over the coming months Warbington will work on a report that discusses findings and proposes some possible solutions.

- Dan Friedman

LaGrange Group

Variety: the Spice of Life!

The LaGrange group strives to cover many bases in our mission to "explore, enjoy, and protect the planet." (1) We offer **educational opportunities** at our monthly meetings, through special programs and in some of our outings. (2) We offer **activist opportunities** so our members can help protect the planet. (3) We offer **outings** so we can recharge our batteries through exploration and enjoyment of local rivers, trails and organic farms. (4) We offer several **social events** each year to celebrate our friendships. (5) This year we plan to hold our first **fundraising event** to support our Chapter's work protecting Georgia's wildlands and expanding Georgia's clean energy programs and public transit options.

- Laura Breyfogle



Scene from a recent LaGrange Group Outing

Centennial Group

SUMMER EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



We held our most recent **Adopt-A-Mile Clean-up** on September 18 at our segment on Lower Roswell Road (The Rushway), followed by our traditional social gathering at Tijuana Joe's! Organized by Angie Netterville.

Our **Rivers Alive Cleanup** on August 22, with 11 enthusiastic paddlers, removed about 600 pounds of trash from the Chattahoochee River in Cobb County. Centennial member Ina Allison, in conjunction with Keep Cobb Beautiful, helps coordinate this regular event.



An interactive presentation at our **August 6 group meeting** featured Chattahoochee NRA Ranger Jerry Hightower with box turtles and other friends.

Family Fun Day at the Green Meadows Preserve in Cobb County on August 1 drew several members who enjoyed a guided tour of the Bluebird Trail with recent guest speaker Jim Bearden. We also chatted informally with other guests including Cobb Commissioner Bob Weatherford.



Our annual **group potluck picnic** on July 2 at East Cobb Park drew a number of visitors and new members, and featured a short hike and our usual array of culinary potluck delights.



As the Centennial Group wrapped up a busy and productive summer, we looked forward to participating again in the annual **East Cobb Festival and Parade**. This popular community event offered us a great tabling and recruitment opportunity and a chance to strut our stuff with banners and signs as we marched in the Saturday morning parade on September 12. For a recap of this event, check for images on our website and Facebook page.

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

Upcoming meetings include:

- **Sustainability Forum** on October 1 (at the East Cobb Government Center)
- **Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL)** on November 5
- **Annual Holiday Potluck Party & Auction*** on December 3rd (at the Avery Gallery)

All meetings are held at 7 p.m. Check for details on our website and our Facebook page.

**NOTE: For our December 3 Auction, please consider items or services that you can donate to this worthwhile group fundraising effort. Contact Lynn Walston at lynnwalston22@yahoo.com.*

Centennial Group

OUTINGS



We are especially proud of our growing number of outings, participants, and newly certified and enthusiastic leaders. Thanks to Lee Graham and our Outing Committee. Recent and upcoming hikes include:

- **July 17th** – Iron Hill Trail in Red Top Mountain State Park
Leader: Connie Dassinger
- **September 13th** – Hike at Gold Branch Unit of Chattahoochee NRA; Leader: Angie Netterville.
- **September 19th** – Pine Mountain and Cooper's Furnace;
Leader: Connie Dassinger
- **October 31st** – Appalachian Trail Intro hike; Lake Winfield Scott to Blood Mtn; Leader: Lee Graham
- **November 12th** – Arkaquah Trail; Track Rock Gap to Brasstown Bald; Leader: Lee Graham

We have also enjoyed joining **Outdoor Afro** in several of their recent outings and look forward to future shared events. (See write-up and picture on page 9.)

HELP WANTED PLEASE...

Can you help or recommend someone for these jobs? Group Treasurer; Newsletter Editor; Facebook and/or Website Support; Membership and Event Planning. Ask us about our rewards program!

GOALS FOR 2016

We hope to continue to grow our outings program and get outdoors; have Transit, Greenspace, Clean Power and Healthy Communities as meeting topics; involve more youth in our activities; strengthen our partnerships; and increase our use of social media. Please join us.

Metro Atlanta Group

Meetings & Activities

General Membership Meetings

The Metro Atlanta Group meets the second Tuesday of each month. Upcoming meeting dates are **October 13, November 10, and December 8 (Annual Dinner)**.

For regular meetings we start gathering at 7 p.m., with the program beginning at 7:30. For the December 8 Dinner we will start gathering at 6:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 7:30.

General Membership meetings are open to the public and held at the **Episcopal Church of the Epiphany**, 2089 Ponce de Leon Ave. at the intersection with East Lake Drive; the entrance to the church is on East Lake Drive. MARTA Bus 2 runs on Ponce de Leon between North Avenue Station and Decatur Station.

Adopt-A-Stream Program Events

- **Saturday October 3** - biological & chemical monitoring
- **Chemical monitoring for November or December** - call Larry at the number below

We meet on South Fork of Peachtree Creek in Medlock Park, north of Decatur 10-11 a.m. for chemical monitoring. For biological monitoring 10 a.m.-noon, we need many eyes to find the critters of the creek.

From Clairmont Road (between N. Decatur and N. Druid Hill Roads), take Desmond Drive (third street north of N. Decatur Road) until it intersects with Willivee Drive. Turn left and follow Willivee around to Scott Circle, where you turn right. Parking is on your left when you reach the park. Park in the middle, and walk the dirt road with the two-story building on your left and ball fields on either side. Go into the woods behind ball field #5. Bear left and you will see us at a picnic table by the creek.

For information about chemical monitoring and dates, call Larry Kloet at 404-636-7226. For more details about biological monitoring, call Nancy Wylie at 404-256-1172.

For more information, updates and new events please see: <http://georgia.sierraclub.org/atlanta/>

Chapter Contacts

Executive Committee

Chair: David Emory, 404-433-4914,
david.emory@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Administration: Norman Slawsky,
404-664-6259, nslawsky@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Conservation: Mark Woodall,
706-674-2242, woodallmark8@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Laura Breyfogle, 706-845-7235,
breyfogle@charter.net
LaGrange Group Delegate

Eddie Ehlert, 770-402-0087,
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Metro Atlanta Group Delegate

Dan Friedman, 404-610-5770,
dan3688@aol.com
Greater Gwinnett Group Delegate

Bettye Harris, 678-463-7827,
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Centennial Group Delegate

Jennifer Kaduck, 770-925-2575,
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At-Large Elected Member

Linda McBurney, 706-631-1489
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Savannah River Group Delegate

Tom Neff, 770-565-3869,
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At-Large Elected Member

Jeffrey Schoenberg, 404-312-6929,
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At-Large Elected Member

Diane Shearer, 770-934-7062,
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At-Large Elected Member

Chapter ExCom Meeting

The next Chapter Executive Committee meeting will be Saturday, November 21 at the Chapter office in Decatur. Meetings are open to the membership. For more information, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221.

Officers & Chairs

Conservation Chair: Alan Toney,
mudflat@comcast.net

Secretary: Eddie Ehlert, edehkert@bellsouth.net

Treasurer: Tom Neff, tsneff2003@yahoo.com

Finance Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Fundraising Chair: *vacant*
Meeting: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., Chapter Office. Contact the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221 for more information.

Human Resources Chair: Norman Slawsky,
nslawsky@gmail.com

Legislative Chair: Mark Woodall,
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Litigation Chair: Norman Slawsky,
nslawsky@gmail.com

Membership Chair: *vacant*

Newsletter Editors: Diane Shearer and Tanya Frazee,
gasieran@gmail.com

Outings Chair: Sammy Padgett,
sammypadgett@comcast.net

Political Chair: Eddie Ehlert,
edehkert@bellsouth.net

Webmaster: Charlotte Gardner,
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Issue Campaigns and Contacts

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dalekemmm@comcast.net

Coastal Issues: Karen Graineey,
karengraineey@bellsouth.net

• **Coastal Marsh:** Karen Graineey,
karengraineey@bellsouth.net

• **Marine Species/Habitat:** Karen Graineey,
karengraineey@bellsouth.net

• **Okefenokee Swamp:** Sam Collier,
scollier@mindspring.com

• **Savannah Port:** Steve Willis,
snwillis@yahoo.com

Factory Farms: Leah Garces,
leah.garces@ciwf.org

Organic and Locally Grown Foods: Bryan Hager,
bhager@mindspring.com

Population: Todd Daniel,
todddan@mac.com

Recycling: Lori Blank, lblank@hotmail.com

Regional Action to Improve Livability (RAIL):
Meeting: 4th Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office. Committee sometimes skips months. Email first.

Smart Energy Solutions:

Eleanor Hand, eghand@bellsouth.net and
Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com
Meeting: 1st Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office

• **Beyond Coal:** Ian Karra,
ian.karra@sierraclub.org

• **Natural Gas:** *vacant*

• **Nuclear:** Glenn Carroll,
atom.girl@nonukesyall.org

• **Solar:** Thomas Jackson, tj31975@gmail.com

• **Wind:** Eleanor Hand, eghand@bellsouth.net

Water Sentinels/Adopt-a-Stream:

Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Wildlands and Wildlife:

William Tomlin, wmltom@gmail.com
Meeting: 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office. Committee sometimes skips months. Email first.

• **Chattahoochee National Recreation Area:**
Alan Toney, mudflat@comcast.com

• **Federal Endangered Species:** Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

• **Rivers and Wetlands:** Keith Parsons,
kparsons@mindspring.com

• **State Lands/Georgia DNR:** Phil Zinsmeister,
pzinsmeister@oglethorpe.edu

Georgia Chapter Staff

Chapter Director:

Colleen Kiernan, 404-607-1262 x224,
colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org

Chapter Conservation Coordinator:

Brionte McCorkle, 404-607-1262 x232,
brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org

Chapter Volunteer Coordinator:

Yeou-Rong Jih, 404-607-1262 x221,
yeou.jih@sierraclub.org

Wildlands and Wildlife Coordinator:

Joshua Hanthorn, 404-607-1262 x222,
joshua.hanthorn@sierraclub.org

National Staff

Beyond Coal Organizing Representative:

Ian Karra, 404-607-1262 x233,
ian.karra@sierraclub.org

Sierra Club National Programs

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Contact Terri Lyde (lydeterri@bellsouth.net) for
more information.

Sierra Student Coalition

Contact Tyler Faby (tfaby@uga.com) for more
information.

Local Group Directory

A great way to get involved in your Chapter is by joining and participating in a local group. Some groups take certain months off, so it's a good idea to email first. Each group has a website. For maps and additional information on each group, visit the website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-involved>.

Centennial Group

Serving Cobb, Cherokee & North Fulton

Chair/Meetings Contact: Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com

Outings Chair: Lee Graham, leegrah3@gmail.com, 404-202-9065

Meetings: 1st Thursday, welcome/refreshments 7 p.m., program 7:30 p.m.; Life College, 1269 Barclay Cir. SE, Marietta. For directions contact Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com.

Coastal Group

Serving Savannah & surrounding counties

Chair: Karen Grainey, karengrainey@bellsouth.net

Outings Chair: Steve Wagner, sjwgnr@hotmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 520 E. Washington Ave., Savannah.

Greater Gwinnett Group

Serving Gwinnett County

Chair: Dan Friedman, dan3688@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Art Sheldon, asheldon.cp81@gtalumni.org

Outings Chair: Jake Hardison, jake.hardison@ssa.gov

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., Berkmar High School, 405 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lilburn 30047.

LaGrange Group

Serving the LaGrange area

Chair: Laura Breyfogle, breyfogle@charter.net

Conservation Chair: Sim Blitch, simblich@charter.net

Outings Chair: Joanna Baxter, joannabbaxter@yahoo.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday; 6:30 p.m. welcome and refreshments, 7 p.m. program; St. Mark's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 207 N. Greenwood St., LaGrange (no meetings June-August).

Metro Atlanta Group

Serving Atlanta, Dekalb & South Fulton

Co-Chair: Jeff Bragg, braggson@springmail.com

Co-Chair: Konrad Hayashi, rainingatl@gmail.com

Outings Chair: Martin McConaughy, mcmarty@bellsouth.net

Meetings: 2nd Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, 2089 Ponce de Leon Ave. (between Atlanta and Decatur).

Savannah River Group

Serving Augusta & surrounding areas

Co-Chair: Judy Gordon, Ph.D., gordonjudith@att.net

Co-Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Frank Carl, frankcarl@knology.net

Outings Chair: Cathy Black, sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Unitarian Church on Walton Way, Augusta.

Regional Contacts

LeConte Group/Athens & Northeast Georgia

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Forsyth County

Jim Callison, callisonjim@bellsouth.net

Macon

Fletcher Winston, winston_f@mercer.edu

North Georgia

Larry Winslett, winfog@windstream.net

Valdosta

Brian Day, bjday@valdosta.edu

Looking for a group near your home?

The Georgia Chapter website (<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>) contains a map showing the locations of all groups. Or, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262.

CLIMATE
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Georgia Chapter Office

743 East College Ave., Suite C

Decatur, Georgia 30030

404-607-1262 • FAX: 404-876-5260

georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org

<http://georgia.sierraclub.org>

Directions to take MARTA to the Sierra Club

office: Our office is an easy 3-4 minute walk from the MARTA Avondale station (E7). We encourage you to take MARTA when possible. Exit the MARTA station towards the SOUTH PARKING LOT, located on the East College Ave. side. Once outside, proceed to the right towards Sams Street. Cross over Sams Street and the office is the building located right behind the convenience store. The office is the second door from Sams Street — Suite C.

Stay Informed!

SIERRA CLUB WEB SITES

GA Chapter Web Site:

<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>

GA Chapter Outings:

<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings/>

EMAIL LISTS

Subscribe to a Georgia Chapter email list. Just send an email to:

LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG

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LIST NAMES:

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GA-NEWSLETTER-ANNOUNCE (online newsletter updates)

GA-RAIL-NEWS (RAIL/Transit Advocacy Committee)

Subscribe to the Smart Energy Solutions listserve at: gasmartenergycommittee@googlegroups.com

Subscribe to Georgia Chapter Online E-Newsletter at: http://action.sierraclub.org/CHP_GA_Signup

Visit the Georgia Chapter web page and click on "Local Groups" for info on local groups' email lists.

Chapter & Group Elections

CHAPTER & GROUP ELECTIONS

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Georgia Chapter Executive Committee Candidates

Ankush Patel

Location: Roswell
Sierra Club Member Since 2013



About 6 years ago I gave up a low-risk job at Infosys, a global consulting firm, to pursue my passion and start a sustainability unit. I felt I had found my purpose in building consulting offerings and technology solutions for global enterprises to manage sustainability initiatives and address climate change.

While at Infosys I influenced investments to support not for profits address climate change by partnering with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory . About a year ago I decided to commit to a long term strategic focus on sustainability by getting together with colleagues and starting up a venture focused on sustainability consulting and technology solutions (www.treeni.com).

I have been a member of Sierra Club since 2013, and the club provides me a unique opportunity to align my work and passion. It also allows me to volunteer my time and expertise in an area that is dear to me – climate change. The Sierra Club ‘gets it’, in terms of the need to get involved in the political process and use grassroots activism to influence and address the greatest challenge of our times – climate change-- while also protecting and experiencing our great wilderness.

While I try to devote more time to Sierra Club, I serve on the Georgia Chapter’s CS Walraven Council focused on networking and raising financial support. My global experience in strategy, leadership, mentoring, sales, marketing and technology should serve me well if I make it to the Georgia Chapter’s ExCom. It would be a pleasure and privilege to serve.

Jeff Schoenberg

Location: Dunwoody
Sierra Club Member Since 2013



I am the newest member of the Executive Committee, having been appointed just this summer to fill a vacancy. I am asking for your support to continue to serve.

I have a track record through my service on the Political Committee. In that role, I have spearheaded work to get Sierra Club members engaged in key campaigns that could lead to crucial policy changes. Recently, these included a race for a Cobb County Commission seat that could provide the swing vote for transit options for Cobb and a special election for a state House seat where SC supported a progressive candidate who campaigned on transit issues and an eagerness to be a good environmental steward. In both those cases, with Sierra Club help, our candidate won.

I’ve learned over 20+ years working in Georgia politics that environmental concerns are rarely our policymakers’ first priority. I am interested, as I suspect you are, in protecting Georgia’s land, air and water; in ending our local dependence on coal-fired power plants and increasing renewable energy production; in expanding rail and transit options. The Sierra Club has been a champion for these priorities. I would love to make us even more effective. I believe I can.

Sierra Club is one of the biggest membership organizations in the state, but we do not retain enough members because we do not get enough of them truly engaged in our work. I believe in people power. I will put my energy into turning our numbers into greater influence. Sierra priorities can and should become Georgia priorities.

David Emory

Location: Atlanta
Sierra Club Member Since 1995



It is an honor to be considered for another term on Chapter ExCom. I have been a Sierra Club member for 20 years, an active volunteer for roughly a decade, and an ExCom member for the past six. Most recently, I became Georgia Chapter chair, attempting to fill the big shoes left by my predecessor, Mark Woodall. Each of these roles has given me a newfound appreciation for the depth of the Club’s work, and I am excited for the opportunities ahead of us.

Chapter & Group Elections

And indeed, we have plenty on our plate. We continue to make progress on coal plant retirements and the transition to a clean energy economy. We scored a hard-fought victory on transit with the expansion of MARTA to Clayton County. We are taking a lead role on forest protection, particularly around the threatened forests of the Cooper Creek watershed in north Georgia. On these and other issues, the Chapter's leadership is needed now more than ever.

As I write this, I am preparing to leave for the Club's annual meeting in San Francisco, where I will serve as Georgia delegate. While it is always valuable to connect with national staff and fellow Chapter leaders, the work of the Sierra Club ultimately happens at the grassroots level, in our own communities. It is an honor to be able to work with such a talented group of staff and volunteers here in Georgia. I thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to continuing this work together.

Mariangeles Gutierrez

Location: Atlanta
Sierra Club Member Since 2013

The roots of my work stem from 2008 as a research assistant for a Berkeley graduate who was working on a dissertation on the effects of deforestation in Nicaragua. This opened my heart to the human impact on this world.



I've now been an engaged activist for 8 years working on various forms of human rights issues, including the right to an adequate environment. Through Sierra Club I've truly been able to find a community that shares my passion for environmental issues, so I have been a volunteer since 2013. I've had the opportunity to help with key rallies including the Forward on Climate in DC, the EPA Climate Hearing, and the celebration for Clean Power for Georgia. I also co-coordinated vigils for Stop the Keystone XL Pipeline in 2014 and 2015.

My nature is to volunteer with community-engaging events including Sierra Club & Beer and tabling opportunities such as the Wild & Scenic Film Festival. As a grassroots campaigner, I approach most of my work with a holistic view integrating experiences from other organizing communities including being part of the Executive Committee for the Local Atlanta Group for Amnesty International and a Campaign Strategist for SONG; constantly engaging in the policy setting.

As a digital native, my strengths are in event planning, logistics, advertising and networking. I've dedicated my work to enhancing diversity, modernizing communication efforts and engaging the community in creative formats. I am dedicated, passionate and willing to learn; it would be an honor to serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

Mark Woodall

Location: Woodland
Sierra Club Member Since 1989

My first contact with the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club came in 1990. Neill Her-ring, the Sierra Club contract lobbyist at the Georgia Legislature, gave those of us fighting the proposed Taylor County hazardous waste incinerator invaluable advice and assistance. After the defeat of the incinerator, I became the Chapter Legislative Chair. Most recently I served as Chapter Chair for six years. I am currently serving as the Vice Chair for Conservation for the Executive Committee.

The Sierra Club's primary campaign is avoiding catastrophic climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels and moving to a clean energy economy. With the defeat of two proposed coal plants, the retirement of many old coal units this year and with 1,000 megawatts of solar and wind energy soon to be in place in Georgia, we have made significant progress.

The Georgia Chapter is a critical part of the movement to clean energy. We need to continue to lead on this issue and enlist more Georgians to the effort. I would appreciate your support in this work and your vote.



Find your local chapter outings
@ www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter



Chapter & Group Elections

Metro Atlanta Group Executive Committee Candidates

Denise LaSonde

Hello, I am Denise LaSonde, an Atlanta (Little 5 Points) native and a fairly new member of Sierra Club, having joined the Georgia Chapter nine months ago.

After attending a Sierra outing I was hooked on exploring Atlanta and Georgia's outdoor spaces. I had no idea so many forests, nature reserves and wild areas are so close to the city. Having worked for several years in local and federal government I have noticed a significant difference in environmental awareness and local participation in huge swaths of Atlanta. I would like to join ExCom to expand the Sierra Club's reach into new areas and improve community members' understanding of what we are all about.

Nina Dutton

Finding out about the Sierra Club's efforts on energy, climate change and environmental justice inspired me to start volunteering with the Georgia Chapter in 2013. Since then, I have helped with several campaigns, mainly in the smart energy arena, by canvassing, planning rallies and more.

Currently I work in environmental epidemiology research; improving public health is also a major motivation for my activism and advocacy with the Club. In my free time, I love to explore urban and wild places alike. Now I'm looking forward to getting more involved with the Club at a local level to help serve the city I've come to appreciate since moving here nearly eight years ago.

I elected to serve with the Metro Atlanta Group, and I plan to help expand our social and educational events and outings programs, bring members opportunities for action to protect the environment locally and beyond, and reach out across Atlanta to help build the broad movement we need.

Eddie Ehler

I have been a Sierra Club Member for over 20 years and an active Atlanta Group member for about 11 years. During that time I have become Atlanta Group Political Chair, Chapter Political Chair and served happily on the Atlanta Group ExCom.

We have lived in Brookhaven since before there was a Brookhaven, where I own and operate two of the most environmentally-conscious automobile service facilities in the state.

I have a deep and active interest in control and reduction of airborne emissions both chemical and particulate. I also am deeply concerned about the ever more bold encroachment into streams, wetlands and contamination of stormwater runoff. My job on the Political Committees is to promote the election of legislators, county commissioners and city council members who comprehend these problems and share the interests of the Club to maintain our healthy urban environment.

I welcome and am honored by your support to continue this quest.

Seth Gunning

My name is Seth Gunning, and I am a young professional who grew up in the Metro Atlanta area with a passion and commitment to exploring and protecting the planet. At heart, I am an outdoorsman, community organizer and social justice/environmental campaigner. After earning a dual degree in Anthropology and Sociology from Valdosta State University, I dedicated my professional life to those pursuits.

I have worked for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy to build the youth climate movement in Georgia and South Carolina; the Presbyterian Church to eliminate food insecurity in communities across the nation; and most recently I was honored to serve for three years as Georgia's Beyond Coal campaign organizer with Sierra Club. I enjoy hiking, climbing, paddling and running, and have spent much of the past year doing these things all across our nation.

As a member of Metro Atlanta ExCom I hope to help continue the excellent monthly speaker program, and to help grow our group's outings program as well as our political and conservation campaign work. I would also work to increase diversity in our group's membership so that we are more representative of the city we serve.

Chapter & Group Elections

Centennial Group Executive Committee Candidates

Kaye Klapper

I can truthfully say I have been interested in saving wildlife and the environment my whole life. I became known by my friends as a “tree hugger,” a term I wore proudly.

I am presently involved in a re-zoning issue in my neighborhood, trying to save 6.5 acres of mature 50- to 100-year-old trees that will be cut down to build McMansions five feet apart. We have rallied several neighborhoods to fight against what we see as over-development based on nothing more than greed.

Several years ago I joined the Audubon society and learned about native birds on field trips to the Georgia coast and mountains. I became alarmed when I learned that half of the native birds in Georgia, like the bluebird and brown-headed nuthatch, are becoming extinct because of loss of habitat. I decided to make my yard bird-friendly and, after three years, just recently had my yard certified by the Atlanta Audubon society as a Wildlife Sanctuary.

I joined the Sierra Club because it reflects my values and views about what is happening to our planet. I try my best every day to live what I preach. I want to do whatever I can to educate the public and to help save our environment and wildlife.

Lynn Walston

I am a semi-retired school teacher, and I have been a member of Sierra Club for over 25 years. Several years ago, in the 1990s, I served on the ExCom shortly after the Centennial Club was formed. The club has changed and grown quite a bit, but back then I enjoyed writing an occasional article for the newsletter and participating in local decisions, programs, outings and retreats. I have continued to follow the club's activities over the years, and I regularly respond to Sierra Club and other environmental organizations' calls for action.

I have been involved with the out-of-doors all my life—camping, bird-watching, hiking, etc. My parents, sisters and I camped, hunted, fished and observed nature together, and I have always had an appreciation for nature and its preservation. Over the years environmental activism has become a naturally acquired passion and concern for me.

It would be an honor to serve on the Centennial ExCom again.

Gigi Burke

¡Hola! Bonjour! Caio! Merhaba! 你好 (nǐ hǎo)! I am Gigi, like the movie starring Leslie Caron and Louis Jourdan. It has been an honor to serve on the Centennial Group's Executive Committee.

During my tenure, I have had the opportunity to plan some great educational programs, help to increase and diversify our membership, and participate in events, hikes, water monitoring and cleanups. I want to continue helping the Centennial Group to grow and develop by serving another term on the Executive Committee.

For those of you who do not know me, I am a lover of all things learning, science fiction and the performing arts. I have a lifelong travel-bug affliction, for which I take regular vacations to relieve the symptoms.

Since becoming a member of the Sierra Club, I have enjoyed meeting fellow members, becoming more environmentally literate, and advocating to protect our environment. I hope to have the opportunity to continue developing innovative educational programs for members and the public, expanding our membership, and working with great people to inspire and empower others to take actions that have a positive environmental impact.

Steven Bell

While a student at the University of Georgia in 1975, I joined Sierra Club after hearing a program by Roger Buerki and environmental Law Professor Bill Futrell. After moving to Rome, Georgia to teach at Berry College, I was one of the founders of the Berry College Back Packers in 1980. I was instrumental in both Athens and Rome in beginning their recycling programs. Before children, my wife, Linda, and I took many weekend and extended hikes on the AT. After children, we switched over to biking and we and our four children participated in three Bike-Rides-Across-GA.

Since retiring to Cobb County, we have been active members of the Centennial Group. I look forward to working on the important and critical environmental issues which confront us.

Chapter & Group Elections

Greater Gwinnett Group Executive Committee Candidates

Gloria Hallen

I'm Gloria Hallen. I have been a member of the Gwinnett Group for 10 years and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on the ExCom. I am proud of the Sierra Club's accomplishments and am glad to try to assist as I can.

Michael Shapiro

I would like to enter my name as a candidate to serve on the Gwinnett Executive Committee.

I have been a Sierra Club member for over a decade. As a property manager, I know our county very well. I also serve on a number of Boards and Committees. I am a proponent of natural conservation---in all forms. As an amateur ornithologist, birds are of special interest to me. I have served on the Committee for the past two years.

I would appreciate your vote so I can continue to serve the Club, County and State.

Dan Friedman

I have been a Sierra Club member for 15 years and have been actively engaged with the Gwinnett Group for eight years. I have worked to increase our membership- we have increased our membership more than any other group in Georgia over the past two years. I have also pushed for greater recognition of our Group's efforts and we have had great publicity for our stream-monitoring program. I have also worked to have meaningful and timely programs including the effects of water shortages on Gwinnett and more transportation options for Gwinnett citizens. I would like to contribute to our success by reaching out to new members and involving inactive members in our many activities and programs and continue to increase our profile within the Gwinnett community.

Voting Instructions

Support democracy in the Sierra Club by taking time to vote. The Georgia Chapter ExCom election is open to ALL members. To vote, follow the easy steps outlined here.

Chapter Voting

All members of the Georgia Chapter may vote for up to **four** (4) candidates and complete the ballot on page 23. You will find the Chapter candidate statements on pages 18-19.

Group Voting

You may also vote in **one** of the group elections. You will find the group candidate statements for the Metro Atlanta, Centennial and Greater Gwinnett groups on pages 20-22.

Not all groups are using the Georgia Sierran for their election ballots. If your group is not listed, please contact your group leadership (see contacts on page

17) to inquire about your group Executive Committee election.

Joint Membership Voting

If there are two names on your mailing label, then you have a joint membership and therefore get two votes. One person listed on the label will vote in column "A", while the other person will vote in column "B".

Complete Your Ballot

After voting, place the entire page into an envelope. **The page must contain your mailing label, which we need to verify your membership.**

After your ballot is verified, your label will be removed to ensure anonymity during counting.

Mail or Deliver Your Ballot

Your ballot must be received by 5 p.m. on November 19, 2015. Mail to: Georgia Sierra Club Elections, 743-C

East College Ave., Decatur, GA 30030.

Questions?

For questions regarding the Executive Committee elections, please call the Georgia Chapter office at 404-607-1262, or email georgia.chapter@sierra-club.org.

Ballot Verification and Counting

The ballots will be verified and counted by the Elections Committee, on Thursday, November 19, in the Georgia Chapter office at 743-C East College Ave., Decatur, GA 30030 (at the corner of Sams Street and East College Ave., across from the Avondale MARTA station). Ballot verification will begin at 6:30 p.m. Ballot counting will begin following ballot verification. Candidates may observe ballot verification and/or counting, or send a representative to do so.

Chapter & Group Elections Ballot

Remember:

- Please read the voting instructions on the opposite page before completing your ballot.
- If there is one name on your mailing label, please vote in column "A" only.
- If there are two names on your mailing label, one should vote in column "A" and the other should vote in column "B."
- Everyone may vote for Georgia Chapter candidates.
- You may vote for Group candidates for your Group, but **only your** Group.
- Vote for up to the number of candidates indicated below. If too many boxes are checked in either column, the ballot will be declared invalid.
- Detach and fold this **entire ballot page**. Make sure your mailing label is still attached to the back.
- Place ballot in an envelope and mail to the Georgia Chapter office at the address below to be received by no later than 5 p.m. Thursday, November 19, 2015.

Georgia Chapter

Executive Committee Candidates
See candidate statements on pages 18-19

Vote for up to FOUR
candidates

4

	A	B
Ankush Patel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeff Schoenberg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Emory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mariangeles Gutierrez	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark Woodall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Metro Atlanta Group

Executive Committee Candidates
See candidate statements on page 20

Vote for up to
THREE candidates

3

	A	B
Denise LaSonde	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nina Dutton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eddie Ehlert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seth Gunning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Centennial Group

Executive Committee Candidates
See candidate statements on page 21

Vote for up to
THREE candidates

3

	A	B
Kaye Klapper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lynn Walston	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gigi Burke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steven Bell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Greater Gwinnett Group

Executive Committee Candidates
See candidate statements on page 22

Vote for up to TWO
candidates

2

	A	B
Gloria Hallen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Shapiro	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Friedman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mail ballots to: Georgia Sierra Club Elections
743 East College Ave., Ste. C
Decatur, GA 30030

Questions? Call the Georgia Chapter office at 404-607-1262
or email georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org

Deadline: Ballot must be received no later than 5 p.m., Thursday, November 19, 2015.

Notice: Ballots will be verified and counted on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Chapter office.



PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID

Outings & Events

Saturday, October 17, 2015

Paddle & Cleanup on the Savannah River

Time: 9 a.m.

Leader: Cathy Black - 706-284-0230,
sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

Presented by: Savannah River Group

Rated: Moderate

Description: Join us in the Rivers Alive statewide clean-up. We'll have fun paddling the river while helping to clean up our Savannah River. If you want to participate contact Larry at larrkomp@gmail.com.

Saturday, October 31, 2015

Blood Mountain from Lake Winfield Scott

Time: 9 a.m. (tentative)

Leader: Kathy Jo Champion - kjchamp23@yahoo.com

Presented by: Centennial Group

Rated: Moderate

Description: Blood Mountain is the highest and most scenic part of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in Georgia. This is an excellent (and moderate) introduction to the A.T. From Lake Winfield Scott, we'll hike to Jarrard Gap and intersect with the A.T., then take the A.T. up to Blood Mountain to the historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) shelter where we'll have lunch and enjoy the views, then return via the Slaughter Creek Trail. This Blood Mountain Wilderness hike is a moderate loop plus a steep 0.7-mile climb up Blood Mountain. At 4,458 feet, Blood Mountain has excellent views in several directions. Rated: 8 miles / 2 to 3 mph / 1,568-foot elevation gain. Please register directly with Kathy Jo Champion at kjchamp23@yahoo.com. Limit 12.

Sierra Club Outings provide a variety of opportunities for people to enjoy the beautiful outdoors. To find out more about what outings are being offered, please visit our website at:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings>



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